

September 17, 2023

**Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

10:00 am

*Home Coming Sunday*

*Monroe Congregational Church is an Open and Affirming congregation.  
Our deacons and pastors hope you will feel at home here. No matter who you are or  
where you are on life's journey, we welcome you in Christ's name.*

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**Gathering Music** Khumbaya Soweto Gospel Choir, 2005

**Welcome & Announcements**

**Moment of Quiet & Lighting of the Candles**

**Call to Worship**

Leader: In this holy ordinary place, and with these holy ordinary people,

*People: God appears.*

Leader: In this holy ordinary time, and in this holy ordinary life,

*People: God is doing amazing, unexpected things.*

Leader: In our holy ordinary hospitality, and in our holy ordinary laughter,

*People: God catches us unawares and provides the impossible.*

*All: Thanks be to God! Amen!*

**Opening Prayer**

Rebecca Cicarelli, Deacon of the Day

**\*Our Church's Covenant**

inside front cover of hymnal

**Children's Message**

**\*Hymn**

O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing

NCH #42

*Students may transition to Sunday School with their teachers.*

**Call to Confession – Unison Prayer - Silent Prayer**

*You appear, O God, and we confess that we do not always look up to see, nor do we  
spring into action in welcome. Though we pray to get a glimpse of you, we don't expect  
it will actually happen, so we hold back, uncertain whether strangers deserve our effort.  
When we cannot imagine what you have in mind, we can only trust that you remember  
us, and you will fulfil your promise. Holy One, as you appeared to Abraham and Sarah  
bearing a message they could hardly believe, appear to us today and make us ready to  
receive. Amen. ~silence~*

**Words of Assurance**

**\*Passing of the Peace**

*In order for those tuning in from home to feel included,  
please turn and greet the webcam as you share signs of peace with one another.*

## Pastoral Prayer – Silent Prayer -- Lord’s Prayer

*Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

## Time for Giving

### Invitation

### Offertory

Like a Mighty Stream    *Moses Hogan & John Jacobsen, 2000*

*Our offering plate will be passed among us today.  
You may give online at [www.mcc-ucc/donate](http://www.mcc-ucc/donate).*

### \*Doxology and Presentation

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise Christ, the Word in flesh, born low,  
Praise Holy Spirit, evermore,  
One God, triune, whom we adore. Amen!*

### \*Prayer of Dedication

### Scripture

Genesis 18:1-15, 21:1-7, pg 13

*If you would like to read along, Bibles may be found underneath the pew in front of you.*

### Sermon

Laughing at the Promise

Rev. Jennifer Gingras

### \*Closing Hymn

The Church of Christ, in Every Age

NCH #306

### Benediction

### Parting Music

I Saw the Light

*Hank Williams, 1948*

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*\*Please rise, in body or in spirit*

**God is still speaking, welcome** to all who are worshipping with us today, in-person and online! Worship is live streamed on church’s You Tube Channel under CCLI Streaming License #2169137 on: <https://www.youtube.com/monroecongregationalchurchucc>, as well as on our Facebook page “Monroe Congregational Church, UCC”

We are an **Open & Affirming** congregation of the United Church of Christ, and we invite everyone to join in the full life and ministry of this church. We strive in word and deed to be faithful to Jesus’ model of loving acceptance and welcome to all persons, inclusive of every age, race, ability, economic and social status, nationality, faith background, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital standing and family structure.



Please join us for a time of **fellowship** following the service in Wilton Hall.

**Join in the fun TODAY! Now With Bouncy House!!!**



**HOMECOMING PICNIC**

Come enjoy a nice meal, fun & games (Bounce House!)  
and reconnect with your church family!

12-4pm September 17, 2023 at Wolfe Park

Bring a salad or dessert to share. Drinks, hot dogs,  
hamburgers and veggie burgers will be provided.

**Thank you for assisting in this morning's worship!**

- **Deacon:** Rebecca Cicarelli
- **Usher:** Julio Morales
- **Lay Reader:** Frank Wittenauer
- **Trustee:** Frank Wittenauer
- **Counter:** Zach Gingras
- **Coffee Host:** Dave & Kathy Allen
- **Web Steward:** Scott Young

**Flowers for Worship:** Would you like to honor or remember a loved one, or celebrate a milestone? You can do so, while also helping Monroe Congregational Church continue its tradition of fresh **flowers** on the communion table. You can sign-up in Wilton Hall or online! You may choose to arrange flowers from your garden, purchase an arrangement, or send a check (\$25) to Monroe Congregational Church (memo: "flowers" & the date) or use our website to pay online, and we will order for you. If you are supplying the flowers yourself, please set them up between 9:30am and 9:45am, before worship. Thank you!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C48ADAC2CA5FEC61-flowers> or [MCC-UCC.org](http://MCC-UCC.org)





to the following people and to anyone we may have missed, we will keep you in our prayers. (Number is birth date)

Julie McHugh <sup>(17)</sup>

Collen Konkol <sup>(20)</sup>

Mary Massar <sup>(21)</sup>

David Rooney <sup>(19)</sup>

Marisa Pinto <sup>(20)</sup>

Kristen Prall-Boronski <sup>(24)</sup>

Jeff Swift <sup>(19)</sup>

Vandana Sampson <sup>(20)</sup>



**Happy Wedding Anniversary** to the following couples and to anyone we may have missed, we will keep you in our prayers. (Number is anniversary date)

Jenn & Andy Nivison<sup>(19)</sup> and Marilyn & Robert Schultz<sup>(20)</sup>

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**Trustees**



**Pledge Envelopes:** If you pledge to the church and would like to use pledge envelopes please call 203-268-9327 or email Diane at secretary@MCC-UCC.org before the September 30th order deadline –thank you!  
(Offering envelopes are also available in the pews.)



If you'd like to give online during worship (or anytime), simply scan this QR code, which will take you to our VANCO electronic giving page. Thank you so much for your support!



**2023 Capital Campaign Update**

Earlier this year, the MCC Board of Trustees launched a capital campaign designed to raise funds needed to support the painting of the Meeting House and the front of Beardsley Hall. With the goal of raising \$25,000 to complete this project, the campaign has progressed well, but we are a bit short of our goal with \$17,476 donated from 47 MCC members or families as of mid-August.

If you haven't donated to this campaign, please consider making a donation in September to help us complete the campaign. If you have already donated to this campaign, but would like to make an additional donation that would be appreciated as well. Donations can be sent to the church office to the attention of the Receiver, online via the Donate button on our web site or via the offering plate at Sunday service. Thanks for your donations and consideration and please contact MCC Receiver John O'Rourke ([jorourke224@gmail.com](mailto:jorourke224@gmail.com)) if you have any questions.



## Faith Formation



### Register Now for 2023/2024 Children & Youth Programming at MCC!

We are planning this year's programming!  
Please sign up your child(ren) and youth for the 2023/2024 season.

Sign up on our website **MCC-UCC.org** or  
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C48ADAC2CA5FEC61-youth1>



Love working with youth, want to spread God's love to the children of our congregation in this upcoming **22/23 school year**? **Please consider teaching Sunday School** (Pre k - 6th) **or being an adult advisor for our Jr PF youth group** (ages 11-14). You can speak to Jeanette with any questions or to express interest. Thank you!



### JR PF STARTS TODAY at 5 pm! Come check it out!

**Our beloved Youth Group, JR PF, dedicated for 6th to 8th graders, is in need of advisors for the upcoming 2023-2024 school year.**

We are looking for individuals who are passionate about working with middle schoolers, who can embody God's love, and who are willing to be dedicated and reliable Youth Group advisors. If you have a heart for this age group and a desire to invest in their spiritual growth, we would love for you to join us!!

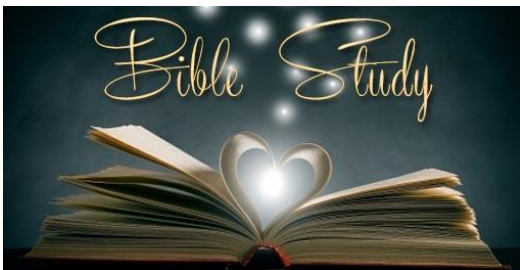


If you are interested becoming an advisor or would like to learn more, please reach out to Jeanette Cardentey Morales at [jeanettemcardentey@gmail.com](mailto:jeanettemcardentey@gmail.com) or 203-257-9637.

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## Deacons

A **Confirmation Orientation Meeting** for parents and confirmands will be held on Wednesday, September 20<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm in Dineson Parlor. There will be a **Dedication** moment during worship on Sunday, October 1st. **Classes are held from 7:00-8:00 on most Wednesdays beginning October 4<sup>th</sup>.** If you have any questions or concerns, please let Pastor Jenn know.



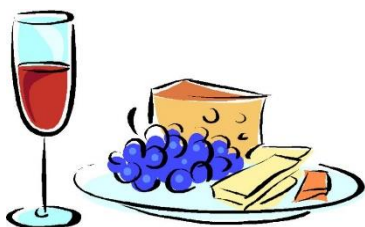
**Weekly Bible Study** We cordially invite you to join us each week as we gather together to learn with and through one another. All are welcome in Dineson Parlor, from **9:30-11 am**. After a time of fellowship and prayer concerns, we read and discuss upcoming scripture texts or other faith-related topics. Bring your favorite Bible (whatever version you prefer) and a small notebook. Let Pastor Jenn know if you have any questions!

**Snack & Chat with NOOMA:** During this program year, Pastor Jenn will be offering a snack and chat group after Sunday Worship once a month. NOOMA is a series of 24 short films (less than 14 minutes each) that "blend [events of] everyday with discussion about God". Each short story covers a specific topic on a real-life situation, usually by relating the various experiences from a Christian perspective. The series features Rob Bell, the author of Love Wins. The name NOOMA comes from a phonetic spelling of the Greek word πνευμα (pneuma), meaning "wind or spirit". Join us in Dineson Parlor to enjoy some snacks, a video and light discussion – no prep necessary and all are welcome!

Sept 24 – NAME                      Oct 29 – SHELLS                      Nov 12 – TOMATO                      Dec 10 - SHE

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### Outreach



#### **Outreach Wine Tasting Fundraiser for CWS Disaster Relief**

*October 14th at the Fracassini's home, 55 Misty Lane, Monroe*

This year, our **Outreach Wine Tasting** will be raising funds towards Church World Service's Disaster Relief efforts. When natural disaster strikes, CWS programs help people prepare for the worst, making plans and gathering supplies.

Whether in Morocco or Sudan, Maui or Mississippi, in just a few moments lives are torn apart. Whether it's a natural disaster or a humanitarian one, CWS teams up with other responders to meet immediate needs. And when the time is right, they shift focus to long-term recovery. When people are forced from their homes, CWS works hard to make sure they have safe and dignified lives. The road to recovery and safety may be a long one, but no one should walk it alone.

Please bring a wineglass and appetizer to share! Suggested donation is \$20/person. Unable to attend in person, but want to contribute? See our basket at coffee hour. Many thanks to Roy Nealon for providing the wines for the evening, and our gracious hosts Linda and Jack Fracassini! Sign up here, or in Wilton Hall:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D44A8AC22A2FB6-wine>



#### **Amos House will be holding its Annual Fundraiser Gala on Friday, September 29, 2023, at Anthony's Lake Club in Danbury.**

**Road to Home at Amos House** is dedicated to breaking the cycle of homelessness for women and their children by ensuring residents have the opportunity to achieve the competencies required for permanent, self-sufficient independent living. Since each individual has a unique story and needs, they focus on customizing programming to nurture life skills, job and coping skills to help residents successfully launch their families into the life that they so deserve. Tickets for the event, which includes apps, dinner, beer & wine are \$100. Please let either [Rebecca Cicarelli](#) or [Pastor Jenn](#) know if you'd like to attend.



The **Mustard Seed Thrift Shoppe is looking for volunteers** to help sort, tag and hang donated merchandise on Tuesdays at 1:15 PM after Labor Day. Sales associates are needed on Fridays for shifts from 10-12:30 and 12:30-3 and on Saturdays from 10-12 and 12-2. It's easy to do with a list of procedures that you can read over or visit a volunteer during business hours and they'd be glad to help you with any questions regarding opening or closing. Please contact Susie Cuseo with any questions at [thecuseos@yahoo.com](mailto:thecuseos@yahoo.com) or 203-268-0280.



Did you know that your spare change can help those in need in faraway lands? A collection jar found on the table during coffee hour will be available for your change. This monetary donation purchases animals and plant products that help families make a living and any offspring from those animals will go to other neighbors making the community stronger and financially fit. Morning Circle matches a majority of the donation from the generosity of the congregation. Please contact Susie Cuseo at [thecuseos@yahoo.com](mailto:thecuseos@yahoo.com) or 203-268-0280 with any questions.



Have you cleaned out your junk drawers this summer and found several prescription glasses, glass cases or sunglasses? Your used glasses can be donated to give the gift of sight. They will be cleaned, checked and given to someone in need of reading the newspaper or a book, watching the sun rise or simply seeing the smile on a loved one's face. Give the gift the sight by donating your prescription glasses/sunglasses and cases. A labeled basket will be in Wilton Hall during the month of September and October. Contact Susie Cuseo at [thecuseos@yahoo.com](mailto:thecuseos@yahoo.com) or 203-268-0280 with any questions.

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### Fellowship



**Prayer Partner** Signups are in Wilton Hall. What's a Prayer Partner? you might ask. This is the person you've been assigned to pray for and keep in your thoughts. All you have to do is sign up and you'll get an information sheet through the mail with the name, address, hobbies, etc. of the person you are to pray for. Meanwhile someone else receives your information and they'll keep you in their thoughts. You can send them a note or card in the mail for special events signed "Your Prayer Partner" and use

the church's address (34 Church St Monroe, CT 06468) as the return. In May 2024 we'll meet for the "Big Reveal" potluck luncheon held in Wilton Hall at 11AM. Praying for each other connects us spiritually and with empathy, strengthens our relationships, promotes healing and well-being, offer support and encouragement and cultivates a sense of unity. Contact Susie Cuseo with any questions or comments at [thecuseos@yahoo.com](mailto:thecuseos@yahoo.com) or 203-268-0280.



**Young At Heart:** Housatonic House, **Thurs., September 28** at noon. Contact Shari Carrano at 203-400-3563 to sign up or for more information.





**Morning Circle** meets the second Wednesday of the month with the exception of January and February. We work in collaboration with the Food Pantry providing bean soup jars for Thanksgiving, birthday bags for children who visit with their families, collect women's hygiene products and make trick-or-treat bags in October. We put together Church World Service hygiene kits for international families in crisis and collect spare change for Heifer International. Please contact Shari Carrano with any questions or comments at 203-400-3563.

### **Our calendar of meetings**

Wednesday, October 11 - Trick-or-treat bags for Food Pantry  
Wednesday, November 8 - Bean Soup Jars for Food Pantry - Gift tags  
Wednesday, December 13 - Annual Christmas luncheon - Location TBD  
Wednesday, March 13 - Birthday bags for Food Pantry  
Wednesday, April 10 - Church World Service hygiene kits  
Wednesday, May 8 - Collection of Women's hygiene products  
Wednesday, June 12 - Annual June picnic - Location TBD



**Please join us for Adult PF the fourth Saturdays of the month in Dineson Parlor from 5:30 to 8pm!** Bring your own beverage and a snack to share. We are excited to bring Adult PF back to MCC in a new format! Each month will be led by different members of the group. It could a discussion of an article or movie, a game night or a service project for MCC or the greater community, or an outing etc. Your presence and ideas are wanted and welcome. All adults young and old are encouraged to attend. Please reach out to Janie Allen via phone/text/email at 203-522-3686 or [janeFallen@sbcglobal.net](mailto:janeFallen@sbcglobal.net) with any thoughts or questions. Our **next meeting will be Saturday, 9/23**. Come check it out!



Book club for September will be the usual 3rd Wednesday, **September 20th** and we will discuss Lessons in Chemistry. Due to it being a popular book it has been difficult to get it from the library. Hopefully we can all get a copy to read by the September meeting.

**October 18th** - 7 pm - The Second Mrs Astor by Shana Abe'

**As always, we encourage anyone to join us.** We will continue to meet via zoom so that all members can join from wherever they may be. Questions can be sent to Paula via email or home phone. [pjsh55@gmail.com](mailto:pjsh55@gmail.com) or 203-452-0850



## **In Our Prayers**

**Bert Muizulis; Nancy Olofson; Kevin Daly** (Gary Thompson's friend); **Albert Nimons** (Gary Thompson's cousin); **Alison Abrams** (Jessica Pfalzgraf's sister); **Griffin Allen; Allie** (Colegrove's friend); **Jennifer Bittar** (Loraine Zeiner's friend); **Jackie Bleakney; Byron Brown & Bruce Bryant** (friends of Will Duchon); **Lori Cimeno** (Peggy & Ron Villani's Daughter); **Dawn** (Donna Konkol's Friend); **Dot Dralus; Matt Duchon; Elaine** (Wendy Colegrove's Aunt); **Bruno Forte** (Nancy Hedine's friend); **David Fischman** (Sue Granello's Friend); **Dave Fuller** (Gail Olson's brother); **Mary & Rachel Heerema** (Julia Gutierrez's mom & sister); **Heidi** (Diane Prall's sister); **Bob Heffernan** (Ann Zeiner's son-in-law); **Brian Hopkins** (Donna Konkol's cousin); **Vera James** (Jenn Wissink's mother); **Jonathan** (Matt Colegrove's brother); **Kelti** (friend of Liska Gutierrez); **Walter Lane** (Marge Fox's brother-in-law); **Monica Lynch** (Bethany Dupuis' friend); **Nicole Malia; Betty McKeown** (Donna Konkol's mother); **Mike** (Janie Allen's son); **Jean Moffat; Olivia Morrison** (Donna Nickdow's niece); **Joe Mumper** (Julie McClenathan's friend); **Pat Nugent; Ocampo family** (friends of Liska Gutierrez); the family & friends of **Jennifer Olson** (Gail Olson's daughter-in-law); **Missy Olson; Osborne** (Colegrove's Family friend); **Dean Perosino** (Gayle Hammond's brother); **Geno Piacentini** (Karen MacDonald's husband); **P.T. Philip** (Liz Sampson's father); **Regina Roberts** (Kathy Maiolo's niece); **Alfredo Rodriguez** (Osirus Gutierrez's cousin); **Noah Santiago** (Shari Carrano's great-grandson); **Charlie Schwartz** (Carol Kelly's friend); **Carlos Serrano** (Kathy Maiolo's cousin); **Yessika Siccardi** (Sampson family friend); **Bernie Sippin; Gary Sippin** (Lori Sippin's son); **John Skarupa** (Barb Pellegrino's brother); **Christine Stadler; Tom Steen** (Jessica Pfalzgraf's dad); **Rev. Dr. Sheldon Smith; Christian & Dain Steiner** (Julie McClenathan's nephews); **Claire Stenzel** (June & Myron Winger's granddaughter); **Olga Terwilliger** (Nancy Hedine's sister-in-law); **Richard Turco** (Jack Fracassini's cousin); **Ruth Wakeley; Charles L. Wynn, Sr.,** (and his mother) **Alleane** (friend of Will Duchon); **Allen Zeiner** (Ann Zeiner's son); **Ann Zeiner**

**The concerns of our world:** The people of **Ukraine; LGBTQ+ children and their families** facing discrimination; those who serve or live in **war or conflict zones** around the world; **first responders** and those who serve in **law enforcement**; those who suffer **discrimination**; those who struggle with **mental illness, addiction, divorce or separation; Caregivers**; the **homeless, homebound and refugees**; Our friends living on the **Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation** and in **Oaxaca, Mexico**

**Those serving in the military, veterans & their families:** Germany: **Rachel Hoffman** (Vaughan Askue's daughter), Virginia: **Chris Meneses** (Loraine Zeiner's friend), Georgia: **Zachary Peters** (Jacob Parker-Burgard's cousin), Kuwait: **Jon Sanchez** (Don Whiteley's grandson-in-law) Stateside: **CPL Zachary Gingras**, 395th Combat Sustainability Support, Middletown. **Joel Smith** (250th Engineering Company)

## MCC Community Calendar

### **Week of Sun. Sept 17<sup>th</sup>**

*Homecoming Sunday*

10:00 am Worship  
12-4 Picnic at Wolfe Park  
5:00 pm Junior PF  
5:00 pm Senior PF

### **Mon. Sept 18<sup>th</sup>**

7:30 pm Council (Zoom)

### **Tue. Sept 19<sup>th</sup>**

1:15 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

### **Wed. Sept 20<sup>th</sup>**

7:00 pm Book Club  
7:00 pm Confirmation Orientation

### **Thurs. Sept 21<sup>st</sup>**

9:30 am Bible Study  
6:00 pm Chime Choir  
7:00 pm Chancel Choir

### **Sat. Sept 23<sup>rd</sup>**

5:30 pm Adult PF Dineson

### **Week of Sun. Sept 24<sup>th</sup>**

10:00 am Worship  
11:15 am Snack & Chat NOOMA  
5:00 pm Junior PF  
5:00 pm Senior PF

### **Tue. Sept 26<sup>th</sup>**

11:00 am – 7 pm Lion's Blood Drive  
1:15 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

### **Thurs. Sept 28<sup>th</sup>**

9:30 am Bible Study  
12 pm Young @ Heart (Housatonic House)  
6:00 pm Chime Choir  
7:00 pm Chancel Choir

### **Week of Sun. Oct 1<sup>st</sup>**

*Communion*

10:00 am Worship  
5:00 pm Junior PF  
5:00 pm Senior PF

### **Mon. Oct 2<sup>nd</sup>**

7 pm Outreach (Zoom)

### **Tue. Oct 3<sup>rd</sup>**

1:15 am Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

### **Wed. Oct 4<sup>th</sup>**

7:00 pm Confirmation Class

### **Thurs. Oct. 5<sup>th</sup>**

9:30 am Bible Study  
6:00 pm Chime Choir  
7:00 pm Chancel Choir

### **Week of Sun. Oct 8<sup>th</sup>**

10:00 am Worship  
5:00 pm Junior PF  
5:00 pm Senior PF

### **Mon. Oct 9<sup>th</sup>**

*Indigenous Peoples Day - Office Closed*  
7:30 pm Deacons (Zoom)

### **Tue. Oct 10<sup>th</sup>**

1:15 am Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

### **Wed. Oct 11<sup>th</sup>**

11:00 am Morning Circle  
7:00 pm Confirmation Class

### **Thurs. Oct 12<sup>th</sup>**

9:30 am Bible Study  
6:00 pm Chime Choir  
7:00 pm Chancel Choir

### **Sat. Oct 14<sup>th</sup>**

6:00 pm Outreach Wine Tasting -  
Fracassini's Home